

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A pressure plate assembly for a friction clutch, comprising:
  2. a housing connectable with an abutment arrangement for rotation therewith about an axis of rotation, the housing having an outer axial side and an inner axial side;
  5. a pressure plate mounted in said housing facing said inner axial side such that said pressure plate is rotatable with said housing, said pressure plate having actuating sections extending past a radially outer edge of said housing;
  8. an energy storage element mounted on said outer side of said housing such that said energy storage device exerts an engaging force onto said actuating sections for urging said pressure plate away from said inner axial side; and
  11. an assembly pretensioning arrangement for holding said energy storage element in a pretensioned assembly position in which the engaging force is prevented from acting on said housing.
1. 2. The pressure plate assembly of claim 1, further comprising a plurality of carrier elements arranged on said housing for supporting said energy storage element, said assembly pretensioning arrangement comprising at least one assembly pretensioning element for supporting said energy storage element in the pretensioned assembly position relative to said at least one carrier element.

1               3. The pressure plate assembly of claim 2, wherein said at least one  
2 carrier element includes a supporting area at an end of said at least one carrier element  
3 facing away from said housing, and wherein said at least one assembly pretensioning  
4 element is positioned between said energy storage element and said supporting area  
5 when said energy storage element is in the pretensioned assembly position.

1               4. The pressure plate assembly of claim 3, wherein said at least one  
2 assembly pretensioning element is ring-shaped and interacts with at least two of said  
3 plural carrier elements to hold said energy storage element in the pretensioned  
4 assembly position.

1               5. The pressure plate assembly of claim 2, wherein said at least one  
2 assembly pretensioning element is ring-shaped and interacts with at least two of said  
3 plural carrier elements to hold said energy storage element in the pretensioned  
4 assembly position.

1               6. The pressure plate assembly of claim 5, wherein said at least one  
2 assembly pretensioning element interacts with each of said plural carrier elements.

1               7. The pressure plate assembly of claim 5, wherein said at least one  
2 assembly pretensioning element is an open ring-shaped element and is radially  
3 deformable for producing and releasing the pretensioned assembly position.

1               8. The pressure plate assembly of claim 1, wherein said pressure plate  
2 assembly is a multi-disk pressure plate assembly further comprising an intermediate

3 plate connected to said housing for rotation with said housing and said pressure plate  
4 about said axis of rotation.

1                 9. A process for bringing an energy storage element of a pressure plate  
2 assembly of a friction clutch into a pretensioned assembly position and holding the  
3 energy storage element in the pretensioned assembly position, the energy storage  
4 element being connected on an outer axial side of the housing of the pressure plate  
5 assembly, the method including the steps of

6                 exerting a force on the energy storage element to bring the energy storage  
7 element to a state of deformation which produces an intermediate space between the  
8 energy storage element and a support area of a carrier element which supports the  
9 energy storage element on the housing;

10                 inserting at least one assembly pretensioning element into the  
11 intermediate space; and

12                 releasing the energy storage element so that it arrives in the pretensioned  
13 assembly position against the at least one assembly pretensioning element.

1                 10. In a pressure plate assembly having a housing connectable with an  
2 abutment arrangement for rotation therewith about an axis of rotation, the housing  
3 having an outer axial side and an inner axial side, a pressure plate mounted in said  
4 housing facing said inner axial side such that said pressure plate is rotatable with said  
5 housing, said pressure plate having actuating sections extending past a radially outer  
6 edge of said housing, and an energy storage element mounted on said outer side of

7 said housing such that said energy storage device exerts a force on said actuating  
8 sections for urging said pressure plate away from said inner axial side, an assembly  
9 pretensioning element comprising a ring-shaped pretensioning body with a break in its  
10 circumference, the break allowing the assembly pretensioning element to be radially  
11 deformed to produce and to release the pretensioned assembly state.

1               11. The assembly pretensioning element of claim 10, further  
2 comprising handle formations at ends next to the break in the circumference to facilitate  
3 the radial deformation.

1               12. The assembly pretensioning element of claim 10, wherein said  
2 assembly pretensioning element is made of wire.